

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

LUKE LESSON 2 (Chapters 7-11)

Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Timothy Sparks and Ben Bailey.

Ben Bailey:

“I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel” (Lk. 7:9). I’m Ben Bailey.

Timothy Sparks:

And I’m Timothy Sparks. Welcome to our study of the Book of Luke. This broadcast is being brought to you by individuals and congregations of the churches of Christ. We hope you will visit the churches of Christ in your area, and let them know how much you appreciate their support of this broadcast. If you have a Bible question or a spiritual concern, they would be happy to help you with it. If you would like a Bible study, they also would be glad to assist you with that. We, too, would like to be of service. Visit us on our website at www.thegospelofchrist.com, where we have streaming audio and video lessons of our broadcasts. You may download these and use them to assist you in your study of God’s Word. We also are making available CDs of these broadcasts, as well as VHS and DVDs. We will be glad to send any of these to you completely free of charge.

In Luke 7, Jesus begins dealing (indirectly) with a centurion—a man in the Roman army who is in charge of at least 100 soldiers. Jesus says: “I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel” (Lk. 7:9).

Ben Bailey:

The centurion’s son is sick. But he will not even go to Jesus himself. Rather, he sends the elders of the Jews to Christ to ask if Jesus can help his son. As the elders and Jesus are on their way to the centurion’s home, the centurion sends word to Christ to tell Him that He doesn’t even need to come to the man’s home. All Christ needs to do is speak the words, and his son will be healed. Jesus identifies that type of attitude as “such great faith.” If God says it, it is true and will happen. This is exactly the type of faith we today need to have. “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17). We need to have the faith that allows us to say: “If God says it will happen, you can rest assured that it **will** happen.” When God gives us instructions regarding our salvation, we must follow those instructions in order to be saved. For example, if Jesus says, “he that believes and is baptized will be saved” (Mk. 16:16), and we have the proper type of faith that permits us to believe and be baptized, then **that** is the type of faith with which God will be pleased. If we have the kind of faith that allows us to trust in God, regardless of how tough the situation must be, then we will have the kind of faith that is commended in the Bible. Peter put it like this: “Cast all your care upon Him, for He cares for you” (1 Pet. 5:7). In Luke 7, we see other noteworthy examples of faith, too.

Timothy Sparks:

John the Immerser stands out as a great example of faith. Jesus said: “For I say to you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he” (Luke 7:28). In the next two verses, we read: “When all the people heard Him, even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.” It was God’s intention, even during the preliminary work that John was doing in getting ready for the arrival of Christ’s kingdom, that people be immersed. Those who refused were said to have “rejected the will of God.” What does this say about people today who act in a similar manner and refuse to obey the biblical injunctions to be baptized in order to be saved?

Ben Bailey:

It would have to suggest that such people are “rejecting the will of God.” Friends, we are not trying to be unkind. We simply believe the Bible. Peter said to the people on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2: “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (vs. 38). If someone reads that plain and simple statement, and then says, “Well, I don’t believe that baptism is essential for salvation,” or “Well, I think that I was saved the moment I believed in Jesus as my Lord,” then they are rejecting the will of God.

Timothy Sparks:

The Scriptures are clear that baptism is what saves us. Peter said that “baptism does now save you” (1 Pet. 3:21). There can be no clearer statement than this. Paul told the people in Galatia that those among them who had been baptized had clothed themselves with Christ (Gal. 3:27).

Ben Bailey:

First Corinthians 12:13 tells us that we are baptized into Christ’s body. Acts 2:47 explains that immediately after people were immersed, they were added to the Lord’s church. Today, people are told to simply “believe in Jesus and be saved,” or to “utter the sinner’s prayer, and Jesus will come into your heart.” Yet when the people in Luke 7:28 refused to be baptized as God had commanded, they were told that they had rejected God’s will. God isn’t interested in what we “think” or “feel.” If we expect to be pleasing to Him, we must obey Him. The New Testament, for example, says nothing about instruments of music in worship to God. In Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16, we are told to sing and to make melody in our hearts. If we decide to insert into our worship to God instruments of music, then we are rejecting God’s will, and God will not be pleased with us. The Bible makes it clear that we must learn “not to go beyond what is written” (1 Cor. 4:6). The apostle John wrote: “Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God” (2 Jn. 9). So, from Luke 7, we learn a significant lesson about the importance of baptism. There’s something else in Luke 7 that almost “jumps off the page” at us. Peter was with Christ on this occasion, and Christ turned to him and said, “Simon, I have something to say to you” (vs. 40). The Bible is not a “dead book” that was written almost 2,000 years ago. Rather, its contents speak to us today.

Timothy Sparks:

Notice Peter's response in that same verse. Peter said: "Teacher, say it." Peter's attitude was (and our attitude should be), "Speak, Lord, your servant hears" (1 Sam. 3:9-10). The writer of the Book of Hebrews said: God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son" (1:1). Colossians 3:16 instructs us: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." When we read passages such as these, we learn about the importance of the Word of God and our receptivity to it.

Ben Bailey:

In Luke 8, we find the parable of the soils. The seed was sown in the soil. Luke 8:11 tells us what that seed is. The seed is the Word of God. Nothing will create faith and help people grow spiritually except the Word of God. We aren't going to be saved by some sort of mysterious "movement in the middle of the night." The seed produces the fruit, and the fruit is the Christian. Thus, the Bible only, makes Christians only, and the only Christians. If you plant watermelon seeds, you will not grow cucumbers, okra, or squash. You reap exactly what you planted—watermelons. The principle, then, is this. When you take the Bible and do exactly what it says, since it is the seed, it will produce nothing but the same type of Christians that it produced in the first century. This is not a difficult thing to comprehend. If you plant a seed, you produce what that seed came from in the first place. Yet some people want to suggest things like, "Well, we can follow the Bible plus _____" (you fill in the blank). Or, they will suggest, "Well, even though it's not written in the Bible, we can still do it." And so on. But the problem is this: If you don't stick with the seed, you don't get the fruit.

Timothy Sparks:

When the Bible is preached and obeyed, it will not produce a Buddhist or a Muslim. When people hear the Word of God and obey it, they are what the Bible calls them: **Christians!** The term Christian is used on three different occasions in the New Testament. In Acts 11:26, the text informs us that the disciples were "called Christians first in Antioch." King Agrippa told Paul, "Almost you persuade me to become a Christian" (Acts 26:28). In 1 Peter 4:16, Peter wrote: "Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter." As Christians, we need to get the seed out to the world so that it can produce more Christians. We must be concerned about the lost. Second Corinthians 9:6 teaches us: "He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully." In the context, of course, it's speaking about giving of our means. But there is a secondary principle within the passage as well. In the context of a farm, for example, it's true that if you sow sparingly, you will reap sparingly. Conversely, if you reap bountifully, you will reap bountifully. This wouldn't have to be in the Bible for me to know it's true, because it's self-evident. If you sow on twenty acres of land just a double-handful of seed, you'll reap a very small harvest. But if you sow bountifully, you will reap bountifully. The same is true in a spiritual context. If we sow the Word of God (the seed) sparingly, we will not enjoy a plentiful harvest of Christians. But if we will preach and teach the Word of God (yes, to all types of soils—wayside soil, thorny soil, stony soil, and good soil), then eventually the seed will fall into good and honest hearts. When people who are honest accept the Word of God and obey it, Christians will be the end result. The seed will produce today exactly what it produced in the first century: **Christians.**

Ben Bailey:

Christianity is not “just” about naming the name of Christ or sitting in a pew on Sunday morning. Jesus said: “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me” (Lk. 9:23). Being a Christian means that we will have a burning desire—a zeal and enthusiasm—to do the will of God. But being a Christian also means that this life is not about **me**. I have to be able to deny myself. The apostle Paul wrote: “Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor. 6:19-20). We have been bought with a price. Thus, we are God’s. We need to use our bodies to glory God. To do that, we have to deny self. We have to take up our cross and follow Christ every single day. We are to follow in Christ’s footsteps (1 Pet. 2:21). In Revelation 14:4, we see a beautiful picture of people standing on Mt. Zion (depicting Heaven itself). We are told: “These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes.” We, too, must be willing to give up the world and to follow Christ, knowing that in the end, it will have been worth whatever sacrifices we have had to make.

Timothy Sparks:

In Luke 9:62, Jesus said: “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” We need to keep our attention focused on the tasks at hand, and we need to keep our eyes on the goal. The writer of the Book of Hebrews put it this way: “Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:1-2). Jesus is at the goal. He’s at the finish line. We must not look back. In Luke 17:32, we are told: “Remember Lot’s wife!” Looking back upon the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah cost her her life. Someone who has become a Christian, but then decides to go back to the world, is not fit for the kingdom of God. Jesus wants us to be people who will make the decision to follow Him, be faithful, and stick to the tasks at hand. Sadly, however, some in religion today say that if you do fall away and return to the world, then you were never really a Christian in the first place.

Ben Bailey:

In Acts 8, we find the example of Simon. He had been baptized. He was a Christian. No doubt he was sincere. Yet he tried to buy the gift of God with money. In Acts 8:20, Peter said to Simon: “Your money perish with you!” Yes, there are people who say that if you fall away, then you weren’t really a Christian to begin with. You do not find such language in the Bible. In fact, you will find exactly the opposite, and learn that a Christian **can** fall away. If it’s impossible to fall away, Jesus’ statement in Luke 9:62 makes absolutely no sense. Jesus said: “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” In Galatians 5:4, we learn that some **had** fallen from grace. Paul, in contradiction to the teaching of some today that you cannot fall from grace, said that, in fact, some **already had fallen from grace**. The Book of Galatians was written to Christians (Gal. 1:1ff.). And some of those Christians, Paul said, **had** fallen from grace. If we don’t keep our eyes on the goal, we will veer off course. It’s somewhat like driving a car. If we don’t look where we’re going, we might just go the wrong way—and end up in the wrong place! The same thing is true of spiritual matters.

Timothy Sparks:

In Luke 10, we find the well-known story of the Good Samaritan. Jesus had been asked the question: “Who is my neighbor?” In response, Jesus tells a story about a priest, a Levite, and a Samaritan. The priest and the Levite are pure Jews; the Samaritan is not. Yet when it came to helping a fellow who had been beaten, robbed, and left for dead, who showed compassion on the man? It wasn’t the priest, and it wasn’t the Levite. It was the Samaritan. Jesus asked the man to whom He spoke: “Which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?” The man answered: “He who showed mercy on him.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.” Jesus’ point is that **anyone** who is in need is our neighbor. It doesn’t have to be someone who lives next to us or just across the street. Anyone who needs our help is our neighbor. The type of love and care that the Samaritan exhibited is the type of love and care that we should exhibit to those around us.

Ben Bailey:

In Luke 10:38ff., we see a good example of the type of love that Jesus was advocating. The Lord went into a certain village, where a woman by the name of Martha welcomed Him into her home. Martha had a sister named Mary, who contented herself by sitting at the feet of Jesus to hear His teachings. The text indicates that “Martha was distracted with much serving.” Imagine the scene. Jesus comes to Martha’s house. Martha is doing everything she can to welcome the Lord and make Him comfortable. Mary, on the other hand, is sitting at the feet of the Master Teacher, learning from Him what He wishes to impart to her. There was nothing wrong with what **either** woman was doing. Serving is a good thing. Studying is a good thing. But, on occasion, it is necessary to prioritize. Martha gets upset with Mary. Martha comes to the Lord and basically says, “Tell Mary to get in here and help me.” Can you imagine Martha being brash enough to say to the Savior, “Tell Mary to stop listening to **your** teachings and to come help **me**”? Jesus responded by saying: “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her” (vss. 41-42). Again, there was nothing wrong with what Martha was doing. But at that moment in time, wouldn’t it have been far better for her to sit at the feet of the Son of God and learn His will for her life? There might be a lot of people in the church today who are good at mowing the yard or fixing the pipes. That’s fine. Serving is important. But we need to be good students of the Word so we can know what God wants us to do, and so we can take care of our own spiritual welfare. Then we can serve others better.

Timothy Sparks:

In Luke 11:27-28, we find the following account. “And it happened, as He spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, ‘Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You!’ But He said, ‘More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!’” While it was a great honor for Mary to have been chosen to be the mother of Jesus, those who hear and obey Christ’s Word receive an even greater blessing! When it came to Mary and Martha, then, which of the two sisters was receiving the greater blessing? It would have been Mary, who put spiritual matters first—just as Jesus taught in Matthew 6:33. The Book of Luke repeatedly stresses the importance of not just **hearing** the Word of God, but **doing** what it says.

Ben Bailey:

That reminds me of Luke 2:52: “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” Luke was a book that was written to the Gentiles. The Greeks had a vision of “the perfect man”—someone who was perfect intellectually, physically, and socially. Jesus, however, adds a fourth dimension to this. He taught that people needed to **live in favor with God**. Yes, it’s fine for us to be smart. And it’s fine for us to take good care of our bodies. But the most important aspect of our lives should be that we are in favor with God. If we are, then very likely, all the other things will fall into place. Luke 10 and 11 teach us that we need to put forth extra effort to grow spiritually as a Christian. We must take deep root in the Word of God, so that we are not like some of those discussed in the parable of the soils. Jesus is the “perfect Man.” He is the perfect example for you and me to follow today if we want to be on the road to Heaven. Are you living the Christian life? Are you a child of God? Have you obeyed the Word of God? When people in the New Testament obeyed God, they became a member of the Lord’s church. You can do that today by obeying the will of God. Jesus said that you can know the truth, and that the truth can make you free (Jn. 8:32). You do not have to live in doubt. You **can** know what to do to be saved. If you have never obeyed the Gospel, you first must hear it. “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Once you’ve heard the Word, you then must believe in Jesus as the Son of God. Jesus said: “Unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins” (Jn. 8:24). But belief isn’t all you have to do. James 2:24 says that “faith only” will never save anyone. We also must repent. Jesus said: “Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (Lk. 13:3). Then you must confess Christ before men. Paul wrote: “If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom. 10:9). Last, you must be baptized, as Christ said in Mark 16:16: “He that believes and is baptized will be saved.” If we can help you become a Christian, we certainly stand ready to do so.

Today, it is our hope and prayer that you will continue in your study of the Word of God. Do not take our word on any of this, but search the Bible. And if the things we are saying are true, they are true because God said them, not because we said them. If you would like to have a copy of this broadcast, we will be happy to send it to you free of charge. Log on to our website at www.thegospelofchrist.com and send us an e-mail, and we will be happy to send you a DVD, VHS, or CD of this lesson. Also, on our website, you can view these lessons, or listen to them, via streaming video and/or audio. We also make available a Bible correspondence course at no charge. We hope you will visit the church of Christ in your area. If we can help you locate a congregation of the churches of Christ, please call on us and we will be happy to do so. It is our prayer that you will continue to study with us as we endeavor to uncover more of “the unsearchable riches of Christ.”

Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

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STUDY QUESTIONS FOR LUKE LESSON 2 (CHAPTERS 7-11)

1. In Luke 7, the story is told of a centurion whom Jesus complimented. What action did the centurion take that prompted Christ to pay him the compliment?
2. According to the Bible, what is the origin of faith? Support your answer with scriptures.
3. Jesus said: "For I say to you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he" (Luke 7:28). Explain the meaning of Christ's statement.
4. In Luke 7:29-30, we learn how the Pharisees and lawyers did something that caused them to "reject the will of God." What did they do?
5. What is the message of such passages as Acts 2:38 and 1 Peter 3:21?
6. Explain the meaning of John's statement: "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God" (2 Jn. 9).
7. According to 1 Corinthians 12:13, into what are we baptized?
8. According to Colossians 1:18 and Ephesians 4:4, how many "bodies of Christ" are there?
9. In Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:19, we are instructed regarding the type of music we are to use in worship to God. What type of music are we commanded to use?
10. In the parable of the soils (Luke 8), Jesus mentioned "seed." What is that seed?
11. Is the following statement true or false? "The Bible only, makes Christians only, and the only Christians."
12. There are two principles included in the teaching of 2 Corinthians 9:6. What are they?
13. Is it likely that Christians may have to suffer for their faith? Use scriptures to support your answer.
14. In Acts 11:26, King Agrippa told the apostle Paul: "Almost you persuade me to become a Christian." Considering the context of Acts 11, what do you think probably kept the king from obeying the Gospel?
15. Jesus said: "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Lk. 9:23). What was Christ's point?
16. In Acts 8, Simon offered to buy the ability to perform miracles, but was told "your money perish with you." What is the implication of the fact that Simon, as a Christian, could "perish"?
17. In Luke 9:62, Jesus said: "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." What is the meaning of that passage for us today?